

Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-09

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R 231227Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8963

IFNFO RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

USIA WASHDC

13 AF/CC CLAR AB PHIL

13AF/CV UTAPAO

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK TH

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4086

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MOPS, MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORT: U.S. MILITARY IN THAILAND

1. THAI-LANGUAGE DAILY PRACHATHIPATAI FRONT PAGED
FOLLOWING STORY TODAY.

2. BEGIN TEXT. THERE ARE SOME SIGNIFICANT INDICATIONS
SHOWING THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT WITHDRAW ITS BASES FROM
THAILAND WITHIN MARCH 20, ACCORDING TO THE PRESIDENT
OF THE STUDENT ORGANIZATION OF THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY.

MR. WICHEN AMNATVORAPRASERT DISCLOSED THAT THE
THAI GOVERNMENT PROPOSED A NEW AGREEMENT REGARDING
THE RIGHT OF THAILAND AT BASES TO THE AMERICAN
EMBASSY FEB. 4, BUT NO REPLY HAS BEEN RECEIVED YET.
AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE SAID THE U.S. MIGHT NOT
HAVE TIME TO REPLY BEFORE MARCH 20, AND THAT IT
MIGHT NOT ACCEPT CONDITIONS OF THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT.

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WICHEN SAID SOURCE AT UTAPAO REPORTED THAT AN

ADDITIONAL 3,000 AMERICAN TROOPS, IN CIVILIAN CLOTHES, HAVE ARRIVED THERE, AND THEY WERE WELCOMED ON ARRIVAL BY HIGH-RANKING THAI MILITARY AND POLICE OFFICERS. CONCERNING THE ARSENAL AT KORAT, WHERE IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL MONTHS TO REMOVE THE THOUSANDS OF BOMBS INCLUDING ATOMIC BOMBS, HE SAID NO MOVE AT ALL HAS BEEN SEEN.

"FURTHERMORE, RADAR SITES IN THAILAND WHICH LINK WITH U.S. COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS AROUND THE WORLD ARE STILL OPERATING. THEREFORE, IT IS BELIEVED THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT WITHDRAW ITS BASES BY MARCH 20. THE PROMISE OF THE THAI GOVERNMENT TO THE THAI PEOPLE TO HAVE U.S. TROOPS COMPLETELY WITHDRAWN IS ONLY A LIE," HE EMPHASIZED.

MEANWHILE, ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL BOONCHAI EXPLAINED THAT NEWS REPORTS THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT PULL OUT ITS TROOPS ARE ONLY RUMORS. IT IS AN AGREEMENT CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE THAI AND U.S. GOVERNMENTS, AND THE U.S. MUST KEEP ITS WORD. THE U.S. GOVERNMENT ASSERTS THAT IT WILL WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS, THAT SOME HAVE BEEN PULLED OUT ALREADY, AND THE REMAINING TROOPS ARE BEING WITHDRAWN CONTINUOUSLY, THE GENERAL ADDED.
END TEXT

3. COMMENT: THE STIRRING CONTINUES. WITH EACH NEW PUBLIC COMMENT FROM GROUPS OPPOSING CONTINUED U.S. MILITARY PRESENCE, WE CAN EXPECT MISSTATEMENT AND EXAGGERATION, BOTH CALCULATED TO ENCOURAGE PUBLIC ALARM, CONFUSION AND RESISTANCE TO THE RESIDUAL.
WHITEHOUSE

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